

Faringdon Folly

Candleford: not far from Faringdon

A LEAP back in time to rural Oxfordshire towards the end of the Victorian era was the setting of Candleford, this autumn's production by the Faringdon Dramatic Society.

Based on the Flora Thompson novel 'Lark Rise to Candleford' the play was adapted by Keith Dewhurst, and performed in the round at the Junior School with a seven piece band playing on stage.

On entering the theatre the band is already playing and feet are already tapping. There's a rustic feel to the setting and it's not long before the comedy comes to the fore. The cast is large, with six actors playing more than one part, the music and singing playing an important and integral part

This was a time when people were supposed to know their place in society and much of the comedy is through the one upmanship and banter amongst the characters.

Candleford is the story of one day in the life of Laura Timms, a young girl, played by Clare Matthews, who joins the post office in Candleford run by the severe and correct, but kind, Dorcas Lane, played by Amanda Linstead. Many comedy moments come from the three stooges in the forge, played by Richard Lock, Allan Dover and Gary Field (pictured) as well as the 'dying for gossip' servant Zillah (Carolyn Taylor) and the curmudgeonly Mrs Gubbins (Karen Whiffen). A special mention must be made of Katie Dyet for her Loony Joe role, which must have caused some physical discomfort.

Even though no horses are present they came to life through the motions of the the galloping huntsmen and women led by Sir Timothy and Sir Austen (Alan Taylor and Adrian Wells). The pair of old soldiers played by John Taylor and Dave Headey conjured up images of old India very effectively. The best came at the end with the Hunt Ball where in a surprise ending half of the audience suddenly found themselves in an improvised circle dance. A wonderful and uplifting finale to an entertaining evening.

Review: Al Cane